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RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//JF/UNMA//  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J3//  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFIUU/COMSOCCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2432  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2629  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5834  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1273

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 001674

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STATE FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CRS, SCA/PAB, S/CT,  
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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
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E.O. 12958 N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT/SHARANA - WOMEN'S TRAINING BEGINS IN  
PAKTIKA

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: In the months of March and April, PRT Sharana funded and conducted Paktika's first women's sewing skills and literacy training activities. These activities trained a total of 38 women from Sharana, Paktika's capital, and Orgun-e, the province's largest population center. The women were trained on the basics of sewing with Chinese-made hand-operated sewing machines provided by the PRT as well as in basic Pashto literacy skills. At the completion of the ten-day training program each of the women received a new sewing machine and the materials that they had used during the classes. These were some of the first efforts to reach out directly to women in the remote and strongly traditional province of Paktika. Key to this successful effort was the work of two female American soldiers assigned to PRT Sharana, who were able to bridge the gender gap with the local women and convince them to attend the classes. All of the women trained in Sharana were ethnically Pashtun and all of the women trained in Orgun-e were Tajiks. While Paktika is predominately Pashtun, a significant minority of Tajiks live and do business in Orgun-e. End summary.

Literacy and Sewing for Paktika's Women  
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¶2. (SBU) Two American Civil Affairs women soldiers from PRT Sharana have spearheaded a program to bring

basic education and sewing skills to women in one of Afghanistan's most remote and undeveloped provinces. Using the U.S. military's Commander's Emergency Relief Program (CERP) funds, PRT Sharana has moved past basic construction and humanitarian assistance missions to an active program of human resource development. The first programs under this initiative were designed to address the critical skill shortages among Afghan women in Paktika province. Beginning in March and continued into April thirty eight of Paktika's women, both Pashtun and Tajik, have been trained in basic Pashto literacy and sewing skills under these programs.

American Women Go Where No Man Can Go  
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¶3. (SBU) Undaunted by the difficulties of addressing women's issues in a traditionally male-dominated social order, the PRT's women soldiers worked closely with Paktika's Director of Women's Affairs to get these programs off the ground. Persevering when the director found excuses not to proceed, the PRT soldiers initially shouldered much of the burden of organizing the events while encouraging the director to become more engaged. Obtaining instructors from Kabul and procuring locally available sewing machines and material, the PRT soldiers also strictly monitored the finances made available to the Director of Women's affairs to ensure that the money was allocated appropriately. After receiving guidance and assistance from the PRT, the Director of Women's Affairs was able to set up and successfully run another such event in Paktika's largest town of Orgun-e with only minimum

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guidance from the PRT. Critical to this success was the ability of the PRT's women soldiers to talk directly and frankly to the Director of Women's Affairs and the women participating in the training events, something that would have been impossible for a man, especially an outsider, to do.

Comment  
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¶4. (SBU) Paktika desperately needs more human development programs. The women taking the literacy and sewing classes were all illiterate and nearly all are widows with little or no means of making a living. They claimed to have no fear of reprisals from Taliban or other anti-government elements due to their participation in the programs and requested that more such programs take place throughout Paktika. These programs have proven popular, and the PRT has received multiple requests from women for training on other skills and in other areas of the province. Paktika has moved forward remarkably in the last year with security, road, district center, and communications infrastructure construction. The military now has begun the softer human development work so desperately needed in Paktika. This important work should be expanded along with the more traditional infrastructure projects in order to reach individuals who may not benefit directly from the larger building and construction projects.

NORLAND